

The Pittsylvania Packet

Spring 2007

Number 64



Pittsylvania Historical Society, Chatham, Virginia

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**Spring Pittsylvania Historical Society
Membership Meeting
Monday Evening, April 16th, 2007 at 7:30 PM**

The Pittsylvania Historical Society will host a meeting on Native American history on Monday, April 16th, at the 1813 Clerk's Office at 7:30 PM. The 1813 Clerk's Office is located behind the Chatham Town Offices on Court Place in Chatham.

The speaker(s), who will be announced, will focus mainly on local history. However, the society also hopes to commemorate the 400-year celebration of the founding of Jamestown and the interaction with Native Americans in that locality.

**Garden Week in Virginia
April 22nd and 26th, 2007**

Five buildings in Pittsylvania County will be open on the afternoon of Sunday, April 22nd for Virginia's Historic Garden Week. The buildings are as follows:

**Camp Home, 131 North Main Street, Chatham;
Griffith Home, 3968 Spring Garden Road;
Shorter-Oakes Home, 220 Fairview Road North;
Little Cherrystone, Fairview Road North, Chatham;
Spring Garden Community Church, 4045 Spring Garden Road.**

On Thursday, April 26th several buildings will be open in Danville. For more information on tickets for the Pittsylvania County events, contact Huntley Friend or Eleanor Thompson in Chatham. For more information on Danville tickets, visit VaGardenWeek.org (where tickets for both Danville and Pittsylvania County events can be purchased).

Books on Growing up in the 1890's in Pittsylvania County Given to Library

Mary Carter Stone recently edited and had published two volumes of her father's stories of growing up at the plantation named Locust Hill in Pittsylvania County. Volume 1 of *Locust Hill Tales* focuses on charming stories of George Stone's pets and farm animals. (Many of these stories would be suitable for reading aloud to children or grandchildren — as George originally did to his daughter Mary). Volume 2 focuses more on the community, farm life, school times, and church meetings (although there are also animal tales included).

Ned Perrow has generously presented copies of both volumes of *Locust Hill Tales* to many of the local libraries. The books are also available for sale online at certain major online websites (including Amazon.com and AbeBooks.com).

Picture from the Past



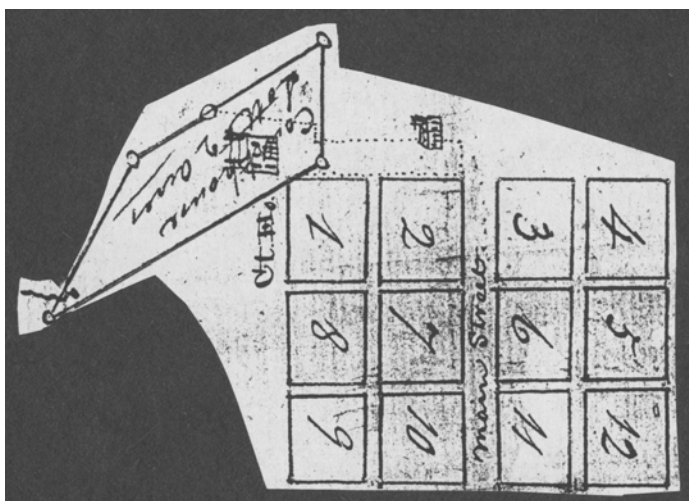
The photograph above is of Mrs. Maurice (Sally Whitehead) Fitzgerald and her daughter, Katherine Whitehead Fitzgerald. Katherine was born January 14, 1916. (The picture is undated, but we can speculate that it was taken in 1916.)

Judge Fletcher B. Watson IV, who is a younger cousin of baby Katherine in the picture, reminisces, “Katherine was called ‘Kappy’ and was a very outgoing person. When I and my brothers were growing up Kappy would visit us and tell scary ghost stories.”

Mrs. Maurice Fitzgerald was the lady who constructed a lovely “chicken hat” from one of her pullets. (For the full story, see Frances Hallum Hurt, “Have You Worn a Chicken Lately,” *The Pittsylvania Packet*, Winter 2006, Number 59, p. 9.)

Bicentennial of the Laying-Out of the Town of Competition

From information collected by Langhorne Jones, Sr.; Henry Mitchell; Madeline Fitzgerald; Herman Melton; and Sarah E. Mitchell.



Survey of Competition (present-day Chatham);
Woodfin's Pharmacy is now situated on Lot 2

On June 16th, 1807, the town of Competition was “Lay’d off” into 12 lots, a Main Street (which was 66 feet wide), and four “alleys”. The ½ acre lots were then sold at public auction on July 20th, 1807. Each lot was separated from the one adjoining by either Main Street or an alley. (Portions of two of the original alleys can still be seen beside the Post Office and two spaces south of Pino’s Restaurant.)

Two conditions of purchase were that the owner had to pay for the lot in twelve months and that the dwelling or building built on the lot have a brick or rock chimney and be at least sixteen feet square.

Lots 1, 2, and 3 were purchased by Robert Wilson; Lot 4 by Fred Hinton; Lot 5 by Anthony B. Haden; Lots 6 and 8 by William Clark; Lot 7 by William Rawlins; Lot 9 by Augustin Carter; Lot 10 by William Tunstall; Lot 11 by Francis Dabney, and Lot 12 by Josiah Ferguson.

A subsequent owner of Lot 2 was Dr. William Anthony (he had a residence and “medicine shop” [probably an apothecary or pharmacy] on the land from the 1820's to the 1840's). Lot 12 was reportedly purchased by Hugh Weir in the 1820's.

Our First Meeting: Yankee meets Rebel

by F. Zane Kinn

The year was 1947. The Berlin Airlift was in full swing in the occupied zone of a defeated Nazi Germany. I was a Technical Sergeant in charge of the 50th Troop Carrier Squadron's supply room. My First Sergeant and best friend in the squadron was James E. Wells of Martinsville, Virginia. Our offices were in the same building, mine at one end of the building and his on the other.

One night during a sleet storm, Major Cummings, our Commanding Officer, came to my office and ordered me to pack all of Jimmy's belongings and bring them to the orderly room. I asked if Jim was being transferred to another base. He answered, "No, Jim was killed in a jeep accident in France." He had gone to a surplus depot in France to purchase a jeep left from WWII. The road he was traveling was slick with ice and he had been drinking. When Jim rounded a curve too fast, he slid into a ditch, causing the jeep to roll over and slide down an embankment, crushing him underneath. His body was returned to his family at the County Line Church, located between Callands and Leatherwood, Virginia, for burial.

When I cleaned out his desk, I noticed two photographs of two girls in his drawer. One had no name on the back of it. The other photo had the name of Ann Stigall and an address printed on the back. I copied the name and

address and later wrote her a letter. I wrote that when I got back to the States, I would like to come to Danville (Virginia) and give her the details about Jimmy's wreck and death. At that time, enlisted men were not allowed to write about anyone's death. Since all our mail was still being censored, this was the only information I could give Ann.

In the winter of 1947, I left Germany and sailed home on an ocean liner, thus ending my tour of duty in the Occupation of Germany. Most of the troops traveling with me went back through Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, for reassignment to Langley AFB. Once I reported to Langley, First Sergeant Turner granted me leave because I had accumulated so many vacation days. I went home to Sunbury, Pennsylvania, to a family I had not seen in many years. After less than a week, I felt it would be a good opportunity to see Ann. I sent her a Western Union telegram dated January 6, 1948, informing her I was leaving Sunbury and would be arriving in Danville that same day.

I told my friends where I was going and they warned me to be careful about meeting a "Southern Girl". They said "southern" women have a way with "northern" men. I told them not to worry; I would be back in about three days.

I left Sunbury on a Pennsylvania Railroad passenger train to Washington, D.C. From Washington, I rode a Southern Railroad passenger train all the way south to

Danville. The train stopped at every station along the way, taking on mail and passengers.

One of the delightful things about this trip was that I had my evening meal in the dining car. It was fun eating and watching the country scenes as we traveled. In the stations people looked in at us as we dined. It made me feel like a rich man.

I was worried about only two things on this trip. First, I wondered if these Southerners could tolerate a Yankee. Second, I had no idea where 812 Paxton Avenue was located, as I knew nothing about Danville. What if the taxi takes me all over the city and runs up a huge fare? I called Ann from the station to warn her of my arrival and hailed a cab. An Aid Station for veterans got the cab for me. My initial worries about the cab were unfounded. He took me straight to Paxton Avenue and I had enough money to pay the small cab fare.

I had on my class A uniform, my brass and my shoes were shined. Everything seemed to be in order. I approached the house and knocked on the door. Ann greeted me at the front door. It felt as if I had been struck by a bolt of lightning! She was beautiful, and I fell in love with her instantly.

It was a very cold, wet, foggy day. The Stigall family greeted me in their living room where a warm fire was burning. I didn't realize it then, but one day they would become my in-laws. They would be like second parents to me.

Before leaving the area, I was able to visit Jim's grave at the County Line Church in Leatherwood, Virginia. Mr. Stigall loaned me his car and I was also able to do some sight-seeing around Danville. The Stigall family tried to get me to stay, but on January 12, 1948, I left for home.

I returned to Danville in April of 1948. I asked Ann to marry me and she accepted on April 26. Our engagement was announced in the Register newspaper on Sunday, May 2, 1948. Ann's brother Richard Lee Stigall was asked to be my best man, but to the great sorrow of the family, he died very suddenly while attending William and Mary College at Williamsburg, Virginia. Dick's death in May of 1848 was a tragedy. Because the family was in mourning, we decided to have a smaller wedding.

Dr. Edward Rees married us in the sanctuary of Mount Vernon United Methodist Church on July 17, 1948. We wore regular clothing as we said our vows before our friends and family. Between 100 and 150 people were in attendance and a wedding breakfast at the Stigall's home followed. There was wonderful food cooked by Catherine Thompson. At least 50 or so of our closest friends and family were there.

Ann's parents generously gave us a wonderful honeymoon in place of the big wedding that did not happen. Our honeymoon began as we left for Richmond, Virginia, in our brand new blue Studebaker. It had been covered with shoe polish with announcements of our marriage. When we stopped in Lynchburg to get dinner, to cut off cans, and to wash the car, we found that the polish had

eaten through the paint! We stayed at the John Marshall Hotel in Richmond our first night.

When we arrived in New York City, we checked into the York Hotel. It was two blocks from Broadway. A close friend, Hank Woeltjen and his wife Viola, led our tour of New York taking us on the Staten Island Ferry and to Coney Island. We also visited the Statue of Liberty, Chinatown, the Radio City Music Hall, where we saw the famous Rockettes, and had dinner at Jack Dempsey's restaurant. We went to the top of the Empire State Building.

After our visit to the Big Apple, we went to Seneca Falls, Niagara Falls and to Sunbury to see Mom. After our visit with my mother, we left for High Point, North Carolina, to see Harvey and Elizabeth Griffith who were Ann's cousins.

Over fifty-nine years have passed since our first meeting, and we now have three sons and three grandsons. Ann and I celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary on July 18, 1998, with 135 family and friends present. Our present minister, the Reverend Jay F. Ashby, presided over a simple ceremony in which we said our vows once again. I announced that Ann was my wife, my lover and my best friend. I love her fifty times greater than the day I married her! The Lord has blessed my life in many ways and I consider myself a lucky man.

Efforts to Care for Injured Horses During the Civil War

by Sarah E. Mitchell

In September 1863, W. N. Pendleton, Brigadier General and Chief of Artillery, wrote to Major Cole, the Superintendent of Transportation in Richmond, concerning the problems with obtaining good horses and with restoring to health injured horses. Pendleton expanded on the difficulties:

“The preservation of our horses, after all we can do in battling against the intrinsic difficulties of our situation and the common negligence of officers and men, leaves many things yet to be desired. Multitudes of those [horses] left too long in the field because of inadequate provisions for relieving them, and too far gone for restoration before they are relieved, are, when relieved, committed to unskilled or unfaithful agents, and either perish on the way to the point where they are to be permanently provided for, or die after reaching those points through lack of the care, food, &c., essential for their resuscitation.”

Pendleton, with help from Major James Paxton, submitted the following solutions:

“First. The establishment of a sort of general horse district in the counties of Halifax, Pittsylvania, Henry, Patrick, Franklin, Campbell, and Bedford, with depots, stables, &c., under the care of a responsible superintendent, who should select his own agents, and have the care of all horses for this army to be resuscitated, &c.

“Second. The procurement from time to time, by this same officer or others in connection with his charge, of a number of fresh horses, to be taken to the depots in said district and kept with those renovated, for transfer when needed to the field.

“Third. The establishment of suitable places of accommodation for horses removed to and from this district and the army, so as to insure their being suitably provided for in transit.”

Pittsylvania County and surrounding areas in Virginia were specifically thought to be desirable because “[t]he district of country is full of forage, away from railroads, &c., so that it can hardly be otherwise available [i.e., the food couldn’t easily be moved to the area where the troops and their animals were]. Slave labor is there cheap, for attending to all

the menial work. There is abundance of material for sheds, &c., and the region is eminently safe from the risk of raids, &c.”

By November 1863, James Paxton had been selected to carry out the work and was conducting business from the “Fair Grounds, near Lynchburg.” The following notice was addressed to the farmers of the “Western part of Pittsylvania and Halifax” (as well as farmers in the counties of Campbell, Franklin, Henry, Patrick, Grayson, Carroll, Floyd, and the Southern part of Bedford):

“The surplus forage in the above district has been set apart for the purpose of feeding the Public Animals not in service.

“All the Corn, Rye, Oats, Hay, Fodder and Straw, not required for the use of the people in the above Counties and parts of Counties, will be wanted by the Government for the purpose above stated.

“Stables are being erected at suitable stations in the District, at which Farmers will be expected to deliver their surplus Forage, and for which they will be paid the prices fixed by the State Commissioners. The following are the Schedule [of] Prices at present:

“Corn unshelled, \$3.95 per bushel; Corn shelled, \$4.00 per bushel; Rye, \$3.20 per bushel; Oats, \$2.00 per bushel; Sheaf Oats, \$3.70 per 100 lbs. Hay, per 100 lbs., \$3.00; Wheat Straw, \$1.30 per 100 lbs; for baling Long Forage, 50 cts. [cents] per 100 lbs.; for hauling Long Forage, 8 cents per mile per 100 lbs.; for hauling Corn, 4 cents per bushel per mile.

“It is with great difficulty that the necessary transportation for armies in the field can be furnished. The Government, therefore, cannot supply the teams to haul the Forage from the farms to the station at which it is needed. It will be necessary for the farmers to do the transportation, for which, they will be paid liberal prices.”

The location of any of these stables is not known. If any readers have information, please share.

Information from United States War Department, et al., *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and ConfederateA, Series 1, Volume 29 (Part II)*, U. S. Government Printing Office, 1890, pp. 697-699 and from an advertisement on microfilm at the Virginia Tech Library.

Pittsylvania Historical Society Books

Maud Carter Clement, *History of Pittsylvania County* (Hardcover) Suggested Retail Price: \$22.

Madelene Fitzgerald, *Pittsylvania Homes and History of the Past* (Hardcover) Suggested Retail Price: \$18.

Madelene Fitzgerald and Frances Hallam Hurt, *18th Century Landmarks of Pittsylvania County, Virginia* (Softcover) Suggested Retail Price: \$11.

Gray's Map of Chatham, Virginia 1878 (Frameable Map) Suggested Retail Price: \$3.

Frances Hallam Hurt, *An Intimate History of the American Revolution in Pittsylvania County, Virginia* (Hardcover) Suggested Retail Price: \$15.

Herman Melton, *Pittsylvania County's Historic Courthouse: The Story Behind Ex Parte Virginia and the Making of a National Landmark* (Softcover) Suggested Retail Price: \$11.

Herman Melton, *Pittsylvania's Eighteenth-Century Grist Mills* (Hardcover) Suggested Retail Price: \$23.

Herman Melton, *Pittsylvania's Nineteenth-Century Grist Mills* (Hardcover) Suggested Retail Price: \$23.

Herman Melton, *Thirty-Nine Lashes Well Laid On: Crime and Punishment in Southside Virginia 1750—1950* (Hardcover) Suggested Retail Price: \$22.

Judge Langhorne Jones, *Tales from a Small Town* (Softcover) Suggested Retail Price: \$5.

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The Historical Society books are currently available for purchase from the following retailers. Suggested retail prices do not include shipping, handling, or tax.

Chatham Books, 10 North Main Street, P. O. Box 71, Chatham, VA 24531, 434-432-2488, chathambooks@gamewood.net

Danville Museum of Fine Arts & History, 975 Main Street, Danville, VA 24541, 434-793-5644

Mitchells Publications, P. O. Box 429, Chatham, VA 24531, 434-432-0595, 1-800-967-2867, answers@foodhistory.com, <http://www.MitchellsPublications.com>

News and Novels, 3282 Riverside Drive, Danville, VA 24541, 434-793-3407

Shadetree Rare Books, 26 South Main Street, Chatham, VA 24531-0994, 434-432-1400, hhurt@adelphia.net, <http://www.ShadetreeRareBooks.com>